

members by letter to serve on the advisory council. Provide a brief explanation in the letter to indicate the amount of time that may be needed and some of the council's purposes. Also give potential members an opportunity to decline.

The advisory council's chairperson should have skills in planning and conducting meetings and developing an agenda. Additionally, the chairperson should possess group facilitation skills and consistently demonstrate a positive attitude toward others.

Terms of membership include appointments to definite terms of office from one to three years. Provision may be made for staggered replacement so there will always be experienced members serving. When a term has been expired, appoint a new council member for a new term.

The person in charge of the council calls the first meeting. Detailed information is provided to direct the council's purpose and goals. Along with this information, any reports, other information and data that have been previously collected are included in an information packet to each member.

Setting of meeting dates and times and other organizational activities should take place at the first meeting. Although the number of meetings may vary, it is suggested that the school counseling advisory council meet at least twice a year to collaborate and give input. At the beginning of the school year, the meeting is held to present the goals and objectives along with the calendar for the school counseling program. At the end of the year, the results gained in the program during the year are shared along with recommendations for program improvement.

Set the advisory council's goals and objectives in advance of selecting advisory council members. It is the responsibility of the educational institution and the counselor involved to let the council know the direction it should take. These goals can be subject to revision as the need arises. To ensure effectiveness, it is crucial that each advisory council meeting have a specific agenda and goals to be accomplished. Send minutes of previous meetings and an agenda of the upcoming meeting to each member several days in advance.

Use of Data

A comprehensive school counseling program is data driven. The use of data to effect change within the school system is integral to ensuring that every student receives the benefits of the school counseling program. School counselors must show that each activity implemented as part of the school counseling program was developed from a careful analysis of student needs, student achievement, and related data. The use of data:

“Disaggregated data is a powerful tool in the hands of a school counselor who is a student advocate. . . Just as data now drive decision-making in schools, so too must data drive the school counseling program.”

*– Peggy Hines, Ph.D.,
Indiana State University*

- Concretely demonstrates accountability and progress toward goals.
- Monitors student progress.
- Creates an urgency for change.
- Serves as a catalyst for focused action.
- Engages decision makers, district leaders, school teams, etc. in data-driven decision making.
- Challenges existing policies, practices, attitudes and mindsets.

- Exposes evidence of access and equity issues for focused advocacy and interventions.
 - Focuses resources, programs, interventions and strategies where they are needed most.
 - Supports grant proposals.
- (The Education Trust, 1997).

To create a data-driven school counseling program, school counselors must look at a wide variety of data from several perspectives. Through data analysis, school counselors, administrators, faculty and advisory council members are able to create a current picture of students and the school environment. This picture focuses discussion and planning around students' needs and the school counselor's role in addressing those needs.

MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS

Using student and school site data to monitor student progress ensures all students receive what they need to achieve school success. School counselors should be proficient in the collection, analysis and interpretation of student achievement and related data. School counselors monitor student progress through three types of data: student achievement data, achievement-related data, and standards- and competency-related data.

Student-achievement data: Student achievement data measure students' academic progress. Student achievement data fields include:

- Standardized test data.
- Grade point averages.
- SAT and ACT scores.

- Graduation rates.
- At or above grade/achievement level in reading, math, etc.
- Passing all classes.
- Promotion and retention rates.
- Dropout rates.
- Completion of specific academic programs (i.e., academic honors, college prep, etc.).

Achievement-related data: Achievement-related data measure those fields the literature has shown to be correlated to academic achievement. These data fields include:

- Course enrollment patterns.
- Discipline referrals.
- Suspension rates.
- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug violations.
- Attendance rates.
- Parent or guardian involvement.
- Participation in extracurricular activities.
- Homework completion rates.

Standards- and competency-related data: These data measure student mastery of the competencies delineated in the Utah CCGP Student Outcomes. These data could include:

- Percentage of students with four- or six-year plans on file.
- Percentage of students who have participated in work-based learning opportunities.
- Percentage of students who have set and attained academic goals.
- Percentage of students who apply effective personal or social skills.

“Our counselors spend endless hours, often unrecognized, serving students in the community. By sharing their results and successes, they no longer hide behind the comfortable veil of modesty; instead, they are celebrated and appreciated as the professionals they are.”

– Lori Holland, Moreno Valley Unified School District

Disaggregate Data

To ensure every student achieves high academic standards and masters the Utah CCGP Student Outcomes, it is important to not just look at aggregate, global data from the entire student body, but also to disaggregate the data. To disaggregate data, school counselors separate data by variables to see if there are any groups of students who may not be doing as well as others. For example, although a high school counselor might feel good about seeing that 60 percent of all seniors complete four full years of mathematics, she may not be as happy if she sees that 75 percent of white students complete the four years while only 20 percent of students of color complete four years of math. Disaggregated data often spur change because they bring to light issues of equity and focus the discussion upon the needs of specific groups of students. (See “Closing the Gap,” on page 60.)

Although there are many variables by which data may be disaggregated, the common fields include:

- Gender.
- Ethnicity.
- Socioeconomic status (free and reduced lunch).
- CTE (multi-period CTE pathway identified).
- Language spoken at home.
- Special education.
- Grade level.
- Teacher(s).

Program Evaluation Data

It is critically important that school counselors use data to show the school counseling program’s impact. To do this, counselors need to evaluate process, perception and results data collected immediately, intermediately and over time (Hatch & Holland, 2001).

Process data: Process data answer the question, “What did you do for whom?” and provide evidence that an event occurred. It is information describing the way the program is conducted and if it followed the prescribed practice (i.e., did school counseling lessons occur in every sixth grade class on violence prevention? How many students were affected? How many students participated in small group counseling?).

Examples of process data include:

- Held six five-session counseling groups with eight students each on anger management.
- 1,350 sixth to eighth grade students received violence prevention school guidance lesson.
- 250 parents or guardians attended a career evening event.
- All junior high school students were seen individually to prepare a four-year plan.

Perception data: Perception data answer the question, “What do people think they know, believe or can do?” These data measure what students and others observe or perceive, knowledge gained, attitudes and beliefs held and competencies achieved. These data are often collected through pre- and post-surveys, tests or skill demonstration opportunities such as presentations or role play, data, competency achievement, surveys or evaluation forms. Examples of perception data for competency achievement include:

- 100 percent of students in grades 9-12 have completed an academic plan.
- 100 percent of sixth grade students have completed an interest inventory.

Examples of perception data for knowledge gained include:

- 89 percent of students demonstrate knowledge of promotion retention criteria.
- 92 percent of students can identify the early warning signs of violence.

Examples of attitudes or beliefs data include:

- 74 percent of students believe fighting is wrong.
- 29 percent of students report feeling safe at school.
- 78 percent of students know the name of their school counselor.
- 90 percent of the parents or guardians feel they understand college entrance requirements.
- 70 percent of eighth grade students understand the relationship between academics and careers.

Results data: Results data answer the question, “So what?” The impact of an activity or program is documented through results data. These data show that your program has had a positive impact on students’ ability to utilize their knowledge, attitudes and skills to effect behavior change. These data are collected from myriad sources such as attendance rates, number of discipline referrals, grade point averages, student graduation rates, etc. Examples of results data for behavior change include:

- Graduation rates improved by 14 percent.
- Attendance improved among seventh grade males by 49 percent.
- Discipline referrals decreased by 30 percent.

Data Over Time

To get a true picture of the impact of the school counseling program, it is important to

look at data over time. Data can be collected over three different time frames: immediate, intermediate, and long-range.

Immediate: Data that measure the immediate impact of knowledge, skills and attitudes change as a result of counselor activity or intervention (e.g., pre- and post-tests on student competencies addressed in a classroom unit; four-year plan completed).

Intermediate: Data collected to measure application of knowledge, skills and attitudes over a short period of time (e.g., improved test-taking ability, improved classroom behavior after small-group counseling, improved grades this quarter after homework or study skill lessons).

Long-range: School-wide, year-to-year, longitudinal student impact data collected for areas such as student attendance, graduation rates and suspension data.

Data Analysis

“ASCA’s National Model for School Counseling Programs is the ultimate tool in helping us all to be on the same page, doing the best for students.”

*– Mary Pat McCartney,
Bristow Run Elementary
School*

School counselors do not have to be skilled statisticians to meaningfully analyze data. Simple percentages can create powerful pictures of what is happening in the school. For example, 72 percent of non-free and non-reduced-price lunch students pass the math portion of the state’s standardized test, while only 38 percent of the free and reduced-price lunch students passed. Of the 12 children retained in first grade, 91 percent were boys. Of the 380 school suspensions, 80 percent were for tardiness.

Data Management

Most of the data fields mentioned above are typically available on the students’ academic cumulative records or in the school’s computerized data system. Student database systems are the most common means by which data are collected and

stored. These databases enhance the school counseling program's ability to monitor every student's progress. Although data are important, this does not imply that school counselors are attendance clerks. Schools may employ school counseling assistants or data clerks to assist in the collection and management of this information. Although data collection and analysis takes time, the benefits for students and the school counseling program greatly outweigh these costs. Each school district should decide what is important to be monitored.

In addition to school databases, school counselors may find relevant data through additional tools. Two examples are education and career planning folders and student credit card-sized compact discs.

Student Education and Occupation Plan folders and student portfolios:

These tools may be utilized by the students, parents or guardians and teachers to document and track student progress in the attainment of competencies related to student success. They are also used to showcase student accomplishments and achievements as related to student competencies. They may include the following documentation:

- Course selection
- Credits earned
- Involvement with activities, clubs, service learning, volunteer work
- Awards and certificates
- Assessments
- Interest inventories taken
- Letters of recommendation
- Student resume
- Work experience
- Leadership activities

New technology holds even greater promise of efficient and effective monitoring devices. Putting student information on the computer

for access by parents or guardians and students, making compact discs or "credit cards" with a magnetic strip that can be accessed for monitoring purposes are only a few of the ideas some schools are exploring. As technological sophistication grows, the formerly daunting task of monitoring student progress promises to become a manageable and valuable strategy. Counselors can't monitor everything; therefore, choices must be made depending on what is most appropriate and what is available at the local site.

CLOSING THE GAP

Schools are no longer judged by the accomplishments of their brightest students; they are held accountable for the progress of every student. Educational statistics indicate an achievement gap based on geographic location, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (The Educational Trust, 2002).

Quality teachers know that not all students learn in the same way or at the same speed. Through the analysis of disaggregated data, educators discover which groups of students need additional help and design interventions specifically geared toward those students' needs. For example, to help all students learn to the same high standards, teachers may create differentiated instruction, and schools might institute programs and activities designed to provide extra time and help to those students who need it. These intentional interventions are strategically designed to close the achievement gap.

In the same way, school counselors know that not all students come to school with equal academic and personal/social resources. Disaggregated data help uncover areas where groups of students are having difficulty. Analyzing disaggregated data also uncovers equity and access issues. Once the problem areas are brought

to light, it is important to thoughtfully consider those factors that are creating barriers in those areas. School counselors then strategically design programs or activities to help lessen the barriers and begin to close the gap.

The ultimate goal of a school counseling program is to support the school's academic mission. Ensuring academic achievement for every student includes counselor-initiated activities designed to meet the needs of under-served, under-performing and under-represented populations. School counselors do this by examining the student academic achievement data and developing interventions designed to help students succeed. These interventions may take the form of traditional school counseling activities such as classroom presentations and individual or small-group counseling. School counselors must also be advocates for students. For example, if data show that Mrs. Smith's students still have a high percentage of discipline referrals after the classroom lesson on conflict resolution, the school counselor may decide to do an extended unit on problem solving for her class. If the data show that the discipline referrals come from a group of five boys in her class who get into fights on the playground, then the counselor may decide to provide a guidance curriculum on anger

management or create an anger management group for boys. Although traditional interventions are helpful, school counselors must be advocates for students. As advocates, school counselors work to remove barriers that hinder academic success.

They challenge school policies that don't promote student achievement or equal access to a rigorous curriculum. School counselors advocate for adequate academic support mechanisms; tutoring classes, quality teachers, a rigorous curriculum and standards-based assignments are all variables that the literature has shown influence the achievement gap. School counselors also advocate for a school climate where access and support for rigorous preparation for every student are expected. For example, a policy that punishes tardiness with out-of-school suspension does not promote academic achievement and may need to be challenged.

The results of these interventions, designed to close the gap, can be documented with student-achievement and achievement-related data. These types of program results move school counseling from the periphery of the school's mission to a position where the educational community views it as crucial to student success.

Action Plans

To efficiently and effectively deliver the school counseling program, there must be a plan detailing how the responsible counselor intends to achieve the desired result (Johnson & Johnson, 2001). Action plans are utilized with the planned school guidance curriculum and with "closing the gap" activities.

The school guidance curriculum plan consists of structured developmental lessons designed to assist students in achieving the competencies (Dahir, Sheldon & Valiga, 1998). The lessons are presented systematically in K-12 through classroom and group activities. The purpose of the school guidance curriculum (as can be reviewed in the "Delivery System" component) is to provide all students with

the knowledge and skills appropriate to their developmental level. The curriculum is organized to help students acquire, develop and demonstrate competencies within the four domains.

As mentioned in the “Use of Data” section, data will drive program decision making. When data are analyzed for every student, school counseling program gaps and discrepancies surface, and school counselors develop “closing the gap” plans (Hatch & Holland, 2001). What gaps do the data expose, and what plans must be in place to ensure equity and access to academic achievement for every student? Once the curriculum is agreed to developmentally, it may remain largely similar year to year while the closing the gap activities may change from year to year based on data.

School Guidance Curriculum Action Plans

Guidance curriculum action plans contain:

- Domain and standard to be addressed: academic/learning, life/career, multicultural/global citizen, or personal/social.
- Student competency addressed.
- Description of actual school counseling activity the school counselor or counseling team will provide.
- Assurance that the curriculum is provided for every student.
- Title of any packaged or created curriculum that will be used.
- Timeline for completion of activity.
- Name of individual responsible for delivery.
- Means of evaluating student success using pre- and post-tests, demonstration of competency or product.
- Expected result for students stated in terms of what will be demonstrated by the student.

- Indication that the plan has been reviewed and signed by the administrator.

Closing the Gap Action Plans

Although the guidance curriculum is for all students, the closing the gap activities address what discrepancies exist in meeting students’ needs and their achievement. Each plan contains answers to the following two questions: Why is this competency being addressed? What data drive the need for the activity? These plans contain:

- Data that drive the decision to correlate with a competency.
- Domain and standard to be addressed: academic/learning, life/ career planning, multicultural/global citizen, and personal/social development.
- Measurable student competency addressed.
- Description of actual school counseling activity the school counselor or counseling team will ensure occurs.
- Title of any packaged or created curriculum that may be used.
- Timeline for completion of activity.
- Name of individual responsible for delivery.
- Means of evaluating student success (what data will you use to show improvement?).
- Expected result for students stated in terms of what will be demonstrated by the student.
- Indication that the closing the gap plan has been reviewed and signed by the administrator.

(See the action plans in the Appendix on page 147 for a sample of the closing the gap action plan.)